

Foster Parents

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

June 2005



*"For these are all our children
and we will profit or pay for what they become."*

— James Baldwin

Join the 75 people who have subscribed to the foster parent LISTSERV®

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>

Check out the foster parent website:

<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For all of you who work tirelessly to ensure that we profit in the future from the investments we make in all our children today, thank you.

New Support Line for Foster Parents

The Foster Parent and Caregiver Support Line began operating June 1. The toll free number is 800-301-1868. The support service is designed to help foster parents and caregivers after business hours between 5 p.m. - 8 a.m. Monday through Friday, and 24 hours a day on weekends and holidays.

State staff trained to talk to foster parents and caregivers will answer the phone at a central location. But they will be work to get you help wherever you are located and when you are faced with difficult emotional or behavioral issues with a child in your care. Foster parenting can be an isolating experience. This service is designed to be a lifeline when you need help and advice and can't reach your social worker or licensor after hours. More routine issues such as those dealing with payment or respite should be directed to the child's social worker or your licensor during the day. So, if needed, call 800-301-1868.

Reimbursement Rates Increase and Updates on Legislative Action

The reimbursement rate for foster parents was increased in the 2005-07 state budget just passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Christine Gregoire.

The rate increase will be 1% on July 1, 2005 and 1% on July 1, 2006.

The Legislature also included about \$14.6 million to make improvements in the foster care system to include more face-to-face contact with children, more timely Child Protective Service investigations enhanced in-home child welfare services programs and education specialists.

Foster Care Month

Foster parent appreciation events were held across the state and foster parents were recognized in ways during Foster Care Month in May. Spokane held a huge appreciation event at the Ridpath Hotel for its foster parents. A picnic was held in Vancouver. Certificates of appreciation were sent out in central Washington and proclamations of Foster Care Month were signed by city governments in Bremerton, Tacoma and Lakewood. The Aberdeen office held fundraisers to combine with private donations to help honor foster parents. The Veterans of Foreign Wars post in south Seattle sponsored an event with the YMCA that included child care, two singers from the Seattle Opera and ballet dancers. Every foster parent who attended was given an appreciation gift. The many events across the state show how, even in difficult financial times, communities joined with Children's Administration staff and partners to honor and support foster parents.

A ceremony was held at the Capitol Building in Olympia May 17 at which Gov. Christine Gregoire thanked foster parents and the many others who care for and about children.

DSHS Secretary Robin Arnold-Williams, Children's Administration Secretary Cheryl Stephani, foster parent Beth Canfield, social worker Darlene Kennedy, foster care alumna Mary Herrick, Governor's Scholar Martin Sepulveda and Virginia Pryor of Casey Family Programs also spoke.

We thank all those who have recognized your astonishingly hard work on behalf of children and stepped up to show their appreciation.

New Children's Administration Leader

Cheryl Stephani was appointed DSHS Assistant Secretary for Children's Administration on May 10. Stephani, 52, is familiar with children's issues. She had been assistant secretary for the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, but also served previously as a special assistant to past DSHS secretaries on children's issues. Stephani is the mother of two grown children.

Trainings

Two trainings are being offered by the CA Resource Family Training Institute on relationship building between foster parents, social workers and biological parents.

The first training, "Improving Teaming Between Foster Parents and Social Workers" stresses the important link between those who care for the children 24/7 and those who have legal responsibility to oversee planning for their future.

The second training, "Engaging Families for Change," focuses on relationships between foster parents and biological parents so everyone can work together for the best interest of the child.

Please click on this link <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/onGoing.asp> and click on the area of the map where you live for more information.

Foster Youth Transition Study

The Office of Children's Administration Research (OCAR) conducted this study between 200-2004 of foster children making the transition to independence and recently released the lessons learned. Among the major findings:

- Most of the foster youth did not have the basic skills, resources, or knowledge to live independently once they left out-of-home care.
- Increased Independent Living services are positively related to better outcomes.
- Foster youth need more concrete and targeted services to help them successfully transition to independence.
- Special attention needs to be paid to high-risk groups: male youth and those having experienced sexual abuse, neglect, or abandonment face greater challenges in transitioning to independence.

Other findings:

- The average age at first entry into placement was 10 years old.
- Over half of the young adults had been in placement more than once.
- 70% had been in placement over 3 yrs; 45% had been in 7 or more placements; 90% had experienced multiple types of abuse, with 72% neglect.

Among the recommendations:

- Provide skill based concrete Independent Living services to better meet the needs of youth in care.
- Assist and encourage youth to attend Independent Living classes to help even reluctant youth participate.
- Examine counseling services currently provided for youth in care and determine if they are using best practice standards to meet the needs of youth in care.

For the full report, click on: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/asp>